



**Lewis County Public Health & Social Services**

# **News Release**

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## **Governor Inslee announces move to next COVID-19 vaccine phase**

Chehalis, WA – On Monday afternoon, Washington State Governor Jay Inslee announced that Washington is now in Phase 1B, tier 1 for COVID-19 vaccines. This new phase expands eligibility for COVID-19 vaccines to people 65 years old and over, and people 50 years old and over who live in a multigenerational household.

According to the Washington State Department of Health (DOH), there are people in Phase 1A who still need to be vaccinated. People who fall into Phase 1A will remain the priority population for receiving COVID-19 vaccines. Michele Roberts, Acting Assistant Secretary at DOH, emphasized the importance of patience during the vaccination process. “Right now we will be able to vaccinate about 100,000 new people each week, and full 1B tier 1 group is over a million people. It will take time,” Roberts said. “Everyone will have to be patient because it will take time to have enough vaccine to get through the full 1B tier 1 group.”

### **Lewis County Numbers**

In Lewis County, the expanded eligibility means that more than 18,000 people now qualify for a vaccine in Phase 1B, tier 1, with no current increase in vaccine distribution. Qualified providers in Lewis County receive a very limited amount of Washington’s weekly vaccine doses. Providence, Valley View Health Centers, and Arbor Health have an average of 90% of the current vaccine supply spoken for and will have administered available vaccines by this Sunday.

Vaccine distribution at both this scale and speed has not been seen previously. “It’s an incredible challenge and there is still much to be developed now that the state has announced their plan going forward. Our local providers are doing phenomenal at ensuring what doses they have received are getting into arms. As we go forward, our department is ready to help stand up bigger events to accommodate the higher volume of doses we are all waiting for,” said JP Anderson, Director of Lewis County Public Health & Social Services (LCPHSS).

John Abplanalp, who leads the vaccination planning efforts for LCPHSS, said, “Currently local providers are receiving a high volume of calls and emails requesting appointments. For those waiting on a response, we ask for your patience. Our local providers can only give out what vaccine they have received. Up to this point, their supply has been incredibly limited.”

While you are waiting to receive your vaccine, you can still follow the three W's: wear a mask; wash your hands; and watch your distance. By doing what we can to help reduce transmission of COVID-19, we are also helping hospitals across Washington from being overwhelmed.

For more information:

Washington's COVID-19 Vaccine Phases:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/VaccinationPhasesInfographic.pdf>

WA DOH Phase Finder: <https://bit.ly/38ThBoc>

LCPHSS Vaccine Webpage: <https://phsscovid19.lewiscountywa.gov/covid-19-vaccine-overview/>

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